

SCIENCE & ENGINEERING ALLIANCE



Robert L. Shepard, Ph.D.

Executive Director, Science and Engineering Alliance, Inc.

Robert L. (Bob) Shepard, founding executive director of the Science and Engineering Alliance, Inc. (SEA), is a physical organic chemist by training and experience. In 1990, he formed the SEA as a nonprofit educational consortium with a mission to create opportunities for access and inclusion of historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) more fully in the federal research and development (R&D) enterprise. Working successfully with federal agencies, corporations, and individuals, he has implemented the SEA Design Team concept to enhance and promote the collective research capacity of the Alliance members in seeking research and development opportunities with high risk and high payoff. The design team approach is emerging as a best practice method for increasing and sustaining participation of HBCU faculty and students in new federal R&D initiatives.

Using his technical marketing, community-relations, and “**partnership brokering**” skills, Shepard works diligently to create highly effective partnerships between the public and private sectors that strengthen the research infrastructure at the SEA institutions. In addition to the partnership agreement signed with Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) in 1990, he signed another major partnership agreement with the U.S. Department of Commerce’s National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) in March 2002. These partnership agreements harmonize and enhance the scientific, technical, and creative resources and talents of the SEA member institutions, and advance knowledge in the fields of physical and chemical science and engineering while producing top quality graduate and undergraduate students.

Shepard developed his research career in the laboratories of the Celanese Corporation and the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory (NRL), and his technical management skills in the Office of Research, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). He has been a Visiting Research Scientist at Howard University, a NASA Fellow, and a guest speaker in the Applied Sciences' Executive Master of Technology Management Program at Wharton School of Business and School of Engineering.

Shepard is a member of various societies and organizations, has received a number of awards and honors, and serves on several advisory boards. In 1998, Howard University identified him as their "Most Distinguished Alumni in Chemistry with Leadership Potential for the 21st Century." Also in 1998, the City Council of Jackson, Mississippi awarded Shepard with their Trailblazer Award. In 2001, he was invited to the White House twice to take part in President Bush's briefings on the "No Child Left Behind" educational initiative. In 2002, he was appointed to the Building Engineering and Science Talent (BEST) Blue Ribbon Panel that is charged with identifying best-in-class and exceptionally promising programs that focus on the full continuum of workforce development to increase the participation of underrepresented groups (http://www.bestworkforce.org/workforce_panel.htm).

Shepard earned a B.S. degree in Chemistry from Saint Augustine's College, and M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Physical Organic Chemistry from Howard University. He was born in Garner, North Carolina on December 25, 1947, and resides in Silver Spring, Maryland with his wife Alzonnia. They have three grown children and two grandchildren. Shepard's philosophy toward his work and his life is to stay the task because "better is the end than the beginning." Therefore, he believes that one should always persevere, but take the high road in the process.